

FDA Warns Not to Eat Cantaloupe from Honduran Grower

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is advising consumers who have recently bought cantaloupes to check with the place of purchase to determine if the fruit came from Agropecuaria Montelibano, a growing and packing company in Honduras. If so, consumers should throw away the cantaloupes.

Based on current information, fruit from this company appears to be associated with a Salmonella Litchfield outbreak in the United States and Canada.

To date, FDA has received reports of 50 illnesses in 16 states and nine illnesses in Canada linked to eating cantaloupes. The states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. No deaths have been reported; however, 14 people have been hospitalized.

Symptoms of Foodborne Salmonella Infection

Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, and stomach cramps. In individuals with poor health or weakened immune systems, Salmonella can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections. Individuals who have recently eaten cantaloupe and experienced any of these symptoms should contact their health care professional.

Tips for Consumers

To reduce the risk of getting Salmonella or other foodborne illnesses from cantaloupes:

- Buy cantaloupes that are not bruised or damaged. If buying fresh-cut cantaloupe, be sure it is refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- After purchase, refrigerate cantaloupes promptly.
- Wash hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling fresh cantaloupes.
- Scrub whole cantaloupes by using a clean produce brush and cool tap water immediately before eating. Don't use soap or detergents.
- Use clean cutting surfaces and utensils when cutting cantaloupes. Wash cutting boards, countertops, dishes, and utensils with hot water and soap between the preparation of raw meat, poultry, or seafood and the preparation of cantaloupe.
- If there is a bruised or damaged area on a cantaloupe, cut away that area before eating.
- Throw away any leftover cut cantaloupe if it's left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Use a cooler with ice or use ice gel packs when transporting or storing cantaloupes outdoors.

What is FDA Doing?

- FDA has issued an import alert to detain all cantaloupes shipped to the United States from this company.
- FDA has contacted importers and is advising U.S. grocers, food service operators, and produce processors to remove from their stock any cantaloupes from this company.
- FDA continues to investigate this outbreak in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and state partners.